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APOLOGIZING IN CHILEAN SPANISH AND AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH: A CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Several studies across languages (Cohen and Olshtain, 1981; Olshtain, 1983; Trosborg, 1987; Holmes, 1989) investigated the different social and contextual factors that influence native speakers to select one or a group of "semantic formula(s)" (Fraser, 1981) in the act of apologizing. Nevertheless the literature is still in its infancy (Fraser, 1981 and Holmes, 1989) in respect to the gender differences between speaker (apologizer) and hearer (recipient), and in the comparison between Spanish and English.¹ This paper aims to investigate the strategies and the semantic formulas that Chilean Spanish and Australian English native speakers use in the act of apologizing.² A role play eliciting an apology was carried out in the participants' mother tongue. Twenty two Chileans (twelve females and ten males) who had lived for not more than three years in Australia and twenty Australians (ten males and ten females) who, like the Chileans, varied in age from 17 to 30 were the informants in this study.

Results show that Chilean and Australian cultural values were reflected in the act of apologizing. Chileans in comparison to Australians make less use of the apology strategy "explicit expression of apology". Nevertheless they appear to give more explanations than Australians in the act of apologizing. Differences were also found in both languages in the use of "speaker and hearer oriented apologies" and in the use of some strategies and intensifiers, in which the addressee's gender played an important role in both languages.

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CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY OF APOLOGIES

During the last few years several cross-cultural pragmatic studies have analyzed speakers' realizations of speech acts in different contexts. From them we can better understand to what extent speech acts are dependent on language and culture (Wierzbicka, 1985; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989) and to what extent speakers' communicative competence in a language, which implies both social and linguistic competence (Olshtain and Cohen, 1983), is important to avoid "pragmatic failure" (Thomas, 1983).

Currently the literature describes fewer than twelve diverse speech acts that have been studied cross-culturally (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989:9). Among them is the act of apologizing which along with thanking, welcoming, deploring, condoling and congratulating is part of Searle's category of expressives (Searle, 1979:15).

Previous studies in apology (Cohen and Olshtain, 1981; Fraser, 1981; Edmondson, 1981; Olshtain and Cohen, 1983; Olshtain, 1983; Cohen, Olshtain and Rosenstein, 1986; Holmes, 1989; Bergman, 1989) emphasize that many factors affect the use of a particular strategy in a language-specific context. Kasper (1988) distinguishes between *context-specific factors* (the "social factors" in Olshtain and Weinbach (1987) such as social power, social distance, sex, and age, and *context-internal factors* (the "contextual factors" in Olshtain and Weinbach, 1987)) which in the case of apology are related to the degree of the offence and to the culturally perceived necessity of the speaker to apologize explicitly (see also Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). In addition an apology can be performed before or after committing an offence.

This present study deals with Coulmas' (1981) ex post apology which in the words of Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984:206) can be characterized as expressions aimed at recognizing the fact that a violation of a social norm has been committed and admitting that the speaker (S) is at least partially involved in its cause. The speaker willing to "set things right" with the recipient may choose different strategies to make an apology. Following Brown and Levinson (1987:58), a strategy may be defined as a "mean(s) satisfying communicative and face-oriented ends". Apology strategies are expressed in terms of "semantic formulas" (Fraser, 1981:260) organized in a speech act set (Olshtain and Cohen, 1983).

The present study investigates the similarities and dissimilarities of apology between Chilean (Spanish) and Australian (English).

The importance of studying the act of apologizing between Chilean Spanish and Australian English springs from the fact that a large number of Spanish speakers living in Australia are workers who may face the necessity, after committing an offence, to undertake "remedial work" (Goffman, 1971), to restore (according to Edmondson, 1981:280 and Leech, 1983:125) the social equilibrium or harmony between speaker and hearer.

In a multicultural society such as Australia it is crucial to understand the cultural values that motivate speakers of a community group to choose one of a set of strategies to perform the speech act of apologizing.

In order to be able to determine this, it is important to firstly describe the apology strategies that Spanish and English native speakers use in their mother tongue in the same event. In this study a role play was designed to elicit an apology. Informants had to pretend to be an "employee" who missed an important appointment with a "boss".

AIM OF THE STUDY

This paper will analyze the frequency with which apology strategies are used by both groups of informants and it will draw some conclusions about how speakers' performance of an apology can reflect the culture, the social reality and the sex of the apologizer. This study aims:

1. to identify differences or similarities in both cultures through examining informants' use of apology strategy(ies);
2. to find out if the sex of the apologizer play a role on the selection of the apology strategy;
3. to understand through investigating informants' use of intensifiers the similarities or dissimilarities in speakers' perceptions of the offence.

METHOD

This study was carried out in Canberra with the help of informants from secondary and tertiary institutions. The informants who played the role of "employees" were twenty Australian English (ten females and ten males) and twenty two Chilean Spanish (twelve females and ten males) native speakers. While six Chileans (three females and three males) and four Australians (two females and two males) played the role of "bosses". The Chilean informants' residence in Australia did not exceed three years and none of them had previously lived in an English-speaking country. A role play eliciting an apology was carried out in the participants' native language. Informants from both languages and sexes had to assume the role of an "employee" who has missed an important appointment with his/her "boss". They were asked to read the card instruction (see Appendix 1) which was written in the informants' native language and to behave as naturally as possible as if it was a real situation. The conversation between the "employee" and the "boss" who share the same language background was carried out in their native language.

In the role play the age of Chilean and Australian "employees" varies from seventeen to thirty years old, while Chilean and Australian "bosses" were sixteen to twenty years older than "employees".

I recorded only one case in which the Australian male "boss" was thirty years older than the Australian male "employee". Nevertheless no difference in the use of apology strategies was perceived when comparing this case with the rest, therefore this conversation was included in this study.

The role plays were organized as follows:

| "BOSS" | "EMPLOYEE" | NUMBER OF INFORMANTS | |
|--------|-------------|----------------------|----------|
| | | AUSTRALIANS | CHILEANS |
| MALE | MALE (MM) | 10 | 10 |
| MALE | FEMALE (MF) | 10 | 12 |
| FEMALE | MALE (FM) | 10 | 10 |
| FEMALE | FEMALE (FF) | 10 | 12 |

DATA ANALYSIS

The act of apologizing was studied through the analysis of:

- (a) the use of different apology strategies;
- (b) the use of an "explicit expression of apology";
- (c) the use of intensifiers.

For each variable the results were compiled for each of the four "boss-employee" dyads: Male-Male (MM), Male-Female (MF), Female-Male (FM), and Female-Female (FF).

Results were compared through:

- (a) a χ^2 -test (after applying Yates' correction to data). This test of goodness of fit was used when expected frequencies were equal to or greater than five;
- (b) a G-test (after applying Williams' correction to data) was used when at least one of the expected frequencies was less than five. (For details on the above tests see: Sokal and Rohlf, 1981.)
- (c) Percentages were compared when none of the above tests was used.

The present work will follow a modified version of the strategies classification proposed by Holmes (1989:20) which is based on the strategies used by previous authors (see Holmes, 1989 for references). The above classification is complemented by the following strategies:

- a) Stating one's obligation to apologize.
e.g.: "I must apologize for ..."
Fraser (1981): strategy 2
- b) Offering to apologize
e.g.: "I (hereby) offer my apology ..."
e.g.: "I would like to offer my apologies to you"
Fraser (1981): strategy 3
- c) Requesting the hearer to accept an apology:
e.g.: "Please accept my apology for ..."
e.g.: "I would appreciate it if you would accept my apology for ..."
Fraser (1981): strategy 4

The strategies already mentioned should be classified as sub-categories of Holmes' (1989) "explicit expression of apology".

The sub-strategy "expression of embarrassment" is included in the strategy "acknowledgment of responsibility"

- d) Expression of embarrassment:
e.g.: "I feel so bad about it".

Trosborg (1987): sub-strategy 2.5.

In addition, the strategies have been divided into direct (i.e. "explicit expression of apology") and indirect (i.e. "explanation or account", "acknowledgment of responsibility" and "a promise of forbearance"), following Trosborg (1987:150). (See appendix 2 for the strategies to perform an apology.)

Use of strategies

Those cases in which any of the four apology strategies (see appendix 2) appeared during the conversation were recorded. If the same strategy appeared more than one it was counted only once.

Use of (direct) explicit expression of apology

Expressions of apology were recorded in both languages. However, for the case of Chilean Spanish an additional test was included since it was the only language that presented the characteristic of using expressions of apology constructed with the verb "pedir" (ask) or "dar" (give) before the main verb.

Examples:

"*Le pido disculpas porque no pude asistir a la cita*".

Lit. trans.: (I) ask you apologies because (I) could not come to the appointment.

"*Le doy disculpas por no haber venido a la cita*".

Lit. trans.: (I) give you apologies for not having come to the appointment.

Such expressions will be referred to throughout this paper as "direct explicit expressions of apology".

If informants of both sexes used more than one (direct) explicit expression of apology" in the role play they were counted as independent since the aim was to record the range of "(direct) explicit expressions of apology" used in both languages in the act of making an apology.

Speaker vs. hearer-oriented apology

Speaker-oriented (SO) apologies are described as those in which the speaker is the agent-experiencer of the apology.

e.g.: "I'm sorry"/"I apologize"/"I'm afraid".
e.g.: "Lo siento"/"doy disculpas"/"doy excusas".
Lit. trans.: "I'm sorry"/"I give apologies"/"I give excuses"

Hearer-oriented (HO) apologies are those in which the S explicitly and directly asks the H participation in the act of apologizing

e.g.: "Forgive me".
e.g.: "Discúlpeme"/"perdóneme".
Lit. trans.: "Apologize me"/"forgive me".
e.g.: "Pido excusas"/"pido disculpas"/"pido perdón".
Lit. trans.: "(I) ask excuses"/"(I) ask apologies"/"(I) ask forgiveness".

The analysis of this section takes into consideration all the SO and HO verbs that informants of both languages used in the role play.

Use of intensifiers

Strategies can also be modified using intensifiers and/or downgraders (Blum Kulka et al., 1989:21). Intensification can be understood as a "form of ... modification which operates to create greater support for H and greater humiliation for S" (Bergman, 1989:8). Intensification can be achieved in different ways (e.g.: using intensifying adverbials, "expressing explicit concern for the hearer

external to the IFPD¹ or other strategies" and others (see Blum-Kulka et al., 1989).

RESULTS

Use of strategies

Figure 1 shows that there is a clear preference for female and male Australian "employees" to use an "explicit expression of apology" (87.5%) and "explanation or account" (85%) rather than "acknowledgment of responsibility" and "a promise of forbearance". In addition there is a tendency by male and female "employees" to use "a promise of forbearance" when addressing a female "boss" (40%) as compared to its use towards a male "boss" (5%).

Examples:

| Explicit expression of apology | Explanation or account | Acknowledgment of responsibility | A promise of forbearance |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| "I'm sorry" | "My car broke down" | "It was my fault" | "It's not going to happen again" |

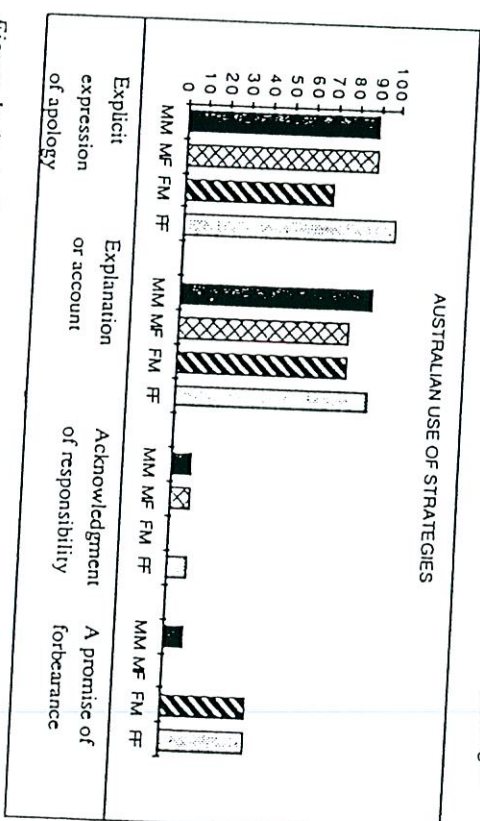


Figure 1: Australians' use of strategies

From Figure 2 we observe that all Chilean native speakers used the strategy "explanation or account" while "explicit expression of apology" was used 58.8% of the time. "Acknowledgment of responsibility" and "a promise of forbearance" was not widely used by informants of either sex but 33% of the female "employees" preferred using the latter when apologizing to a female "boss".

Examples:

| Explicit expression of apology | Explanation or account | Acknowledgment of responsibility | A promise of forbearance |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| "Disculpeme" | "Esnuve enfermo(a)" | "Creo que en parte es mi irresponsabilidad" | "No volveré a suceder" |
| "Apologize me" | "I was sick" | "(I) think that in certain way (I) was irresponsible" | "It won't happen again" |

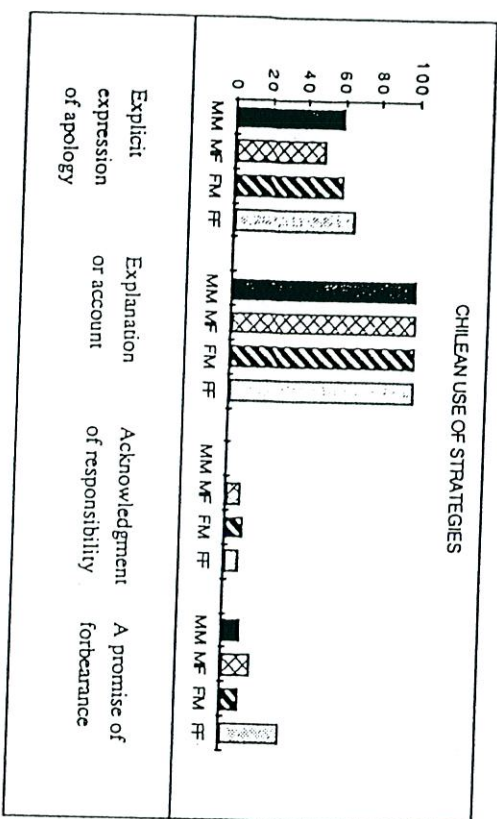


Figure 2: Chileans' use of strategies

Use of direct apology vs. indirect apology

The frequency with which direct and indirect apology strategy was used by Australian participants is shown in Table 1.

| | MM | MF | FM | FF |
|------------------|----|----|----|----|
| DIRECT APOLOGY | 9 | 9 | 7 | 10 |
| INDIRECT APOLOGY | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |

Table 1: Australians' use of direct apology vs. indirect apology

The data show a clear preference for female and male "employees" to use a direct apology instead of an indirect apology while addressing a male "boss" ($X^2=4.9$ d.f.=1, $P<0.005$ for both "employees") but for the female "boss" the preference is significant only in the case of female "employees" ($X^2=10$, d.f.=1, $P<0.01$). The difference for male "employees" addressing a female "boss" is not significant ($X^2=0.9$, d.f.=1, $P>0.10$) even when it is in the same direction as in the other dyads (see Table 1). Comparisons between male or female "employees" addressing "bosses" of either sex unfortunately suffer from a methodological flaw. The "employees" were the same and they addressed the two "bosses" (female and male) sequentially, with only a few minutes between one and the other. Therefore, these comparisons are not strictly independent between samples. Hence, in those cases where the effect is statistically non-significant it could be explained by the fact that the "employee" was the same. Nevertheless, if there is any effect, it means that the specific response would be triggered immediately and the test results will be conservative.

Table 2 shows Chilean participants' frequency of using direct and indirect apology.

| | MM | MF | FM | FF |
|------------------|----|----|----|----|
| DIRECT APOLOGY | 6 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| INDIRECT APOLOGY | 4 | 7 | 4 | 5 |
| TOTAL | 10 | 12 | 10 | 12 |

Table 2: Chileans' use of direct apology vs. indirect apology

Chilean female and male "employees" do not show any preference between using a direct or an indirect apology when addressing a male "boss" ($X^2=0.1$, $d.f.=1$, $P>0.50$ for male and $X^2=0.08$, $d.f.=1$, $P>0.50$ for female "employees"). The same non-significant result is obtained when both "employee" sexes were collapsed ($X^2=0.25$, $d.f.=1$, $P>0.50$). Also, when female and male "employees" address a female "boss" they do not show any preference for direct or indirect apology ($X^2=0.08$, $d.f.=1$, $P>0.50$ for female and $X^2=0.1$, $d.f.=1$, $P>0.50$ for male "employees"). The same trend is maintained after collapsing both "employee" sexes ($X^2=2.22$, $d.f.=1$, $P>0.10$).

Use of (direct) explicit expression of apology

Figure 3 shows the relative frequencies with which Australians used "explicit expressions of apology" in the role play. The semantic formula "(to be) sorry" was among the "explicit expression of apology" most frequently used by "employees" of either sex (83%). The remaining expressions of apology were used with frequencies less than 9%. It appears that male "employees" make use of a slightly greater variety of verbs than female "employees" when addressing either a female or a male "boss", while female "employees" seem to use "(to be) sorry" more frequently than male "employees".

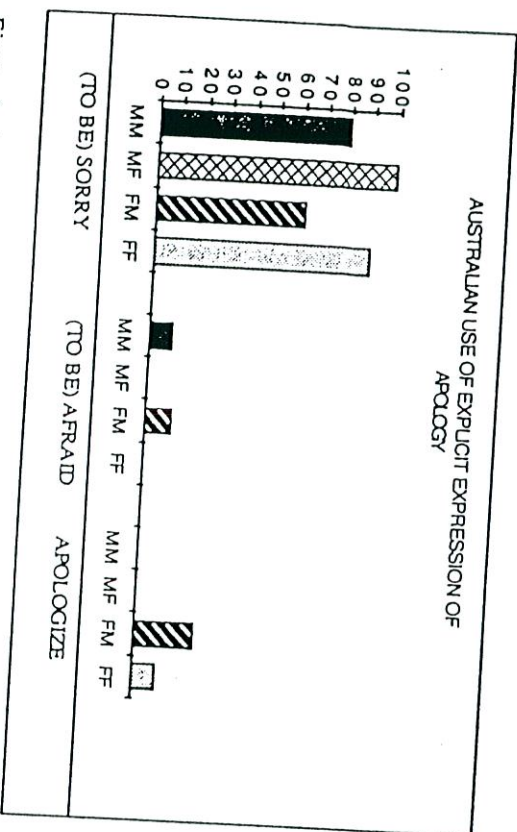


Figure 3: Australians' use of explicit expression of apology

From Figure 4 it is possible to observe that the verb most commonly used by Chileans was "disculpar" (58.25%), used as a performative verb and as a "direct explicit expression of apology", followed by "perdonar" (22.5%) which was also used as a performative and as a "direct explicit expression of apology". Nevertheless, whilst "disculpar" is evenly used by both sexes addressing a male "boss"; "perdonar" appears to be slightly preferred by women addressing a female "boss". The remaining verbs are used with about equal frequency.

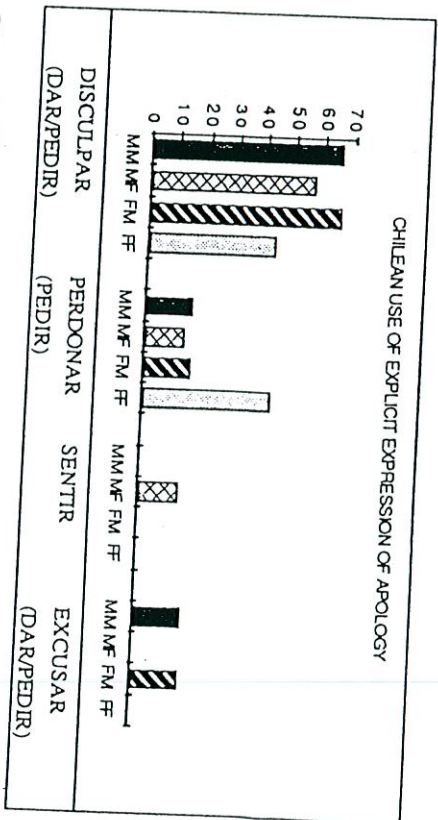


Figure 4: Chileans' use of explicit expression of apology

Use of more than one vs. only one expression of apology

Table 3 shows the frequency with which Australian speakers used one and more than one explicit expression of apology during the role play.

| | MM | MF | FM | FF |
|-------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|
| MORE THAN ONE EXPRESSION OF APOLOGY | 1 | 5 | 3 | 4 |
| ONLY ONE EXPRESSION OF APOLOGY | 8 | 4 | 4 | 6 |
| TOTAL | 9 | 9 | 7 | 10 |

Table 3: Australians' use of more than one vs. only one explicit expression of apology

There is no statistically significant preference for Australian female "employees" addressing either a male "boss" ($G=0.09$, $d.f.=1$, $P>0.50$) or a female "boss" ($G=0.38$, $d.f.=1$, $P>0.50$). Nevertheless, Australian male "employees" show a significant preference for using only one expression of apology with a male "boss" ($G=5.9$, $d.f.=1$, $P<0.025$) while they do not show any preference when addressing a female "boss" ($G=0.12$, $d.f.=1$, $P>0.50$).

Table 4 shows the Chileans' frequency of using more than one and only one expression of apology.

| | MM | MF | FM | FF |
|---------------|----|----|----|----|
| MORE THAN ONE | | | | |
| EXPRESSION | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| OF APOLOGY | | | | |
| ONLY ONE | | | | |
| EXPRESSION | 5 | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| OF APOLOGY | | | | |
| TOTAL | 6 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Table 4: Chileans' use of more than one vs. only one explicit expression of apology

According to this table female "employees" addressing a male "boss" show no preference for using one or more than one (direct) explicit expression of apology ($G=0.21$, $d.f.=1$, $P>0.50$), but male "employees" show a marginally significant preference for using a single (direct) expression of apology ($G=2.71$, $d.f.=1$, $0.10>P>0.05$). Also, when female "employees" address a female "boss" there is a marginal preference for using only one expression of apology ($G=3.70$, $d.f.=1$, $0.10>P>0.05$), whilst male "employees" do not show any preference ($G=0.0$, $d.f.=1$, $P>0.90$). Therefore, both "employee" sexes prefer only one (direct) explicit expression of apology when addressing a "boss" of the same gender as themselves.

Speaker vs. hearer-oriented apology

All Australian informants made use of speaker-oriented (SO) apologies (see Table 5), while Chilean speakers employed both SO or HO apologies, giving preference to the latter (see Table 6). The

English language, in contrast to Spanish, presents a limited number of expressions of apology which are HO. For instance: "forgive me" and "accept my apology" are some examples. Nevertheless in this study these expressions were not used by Australian informants.

Table 5 shows the frequency with which Australian informants of both sexes used SO and HO apologies when addressing either a female or a male "boss".

| | MM | MF | FM | FF | MEAN % |
|----|------|------|------|------|--------|
| SO | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| HO | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |

Table 5: Australians' use of speaker vs. hearer oriented apology

From Table 6 it is clear that when Chilean speakers of both sexes used a "(direct) explicit expression of apology" when addressing either a female or a male "boss", they preferred uttering HO instead of SO apologies.

| % | MM | MF | FM | FF | MEAN% |
|----|------|------|------|------|-------|
| SO | 42.8 | 42.8 | 27.2 | 33.3 | 35.2 |
| HO | 57.1 | 57.1 | 72.7 | 66.6 | 64.7 |

Table 6: Chileans' use of speaker vs. hearer oriented apology

Use of intensifiers

Table 7 reveals that none of the four Australian dyads show any preference for using intensifiers over not using them.

The greatest difference appears in the case of "employees" addressing a male "boss", but that difference is statistically not significant: $X^2=0.10$, $d.f.=1$, $P>0.50$ for either "employee" sex.

| | MM | MF | FM | FF |
|-----------------------|----|----|----|----|
| USE OF INTENSIFIER | 6 | 6 | 5 | 5 |
| NO USE OF INTENSIFIER | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| TOTAL | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |

Table 7: Australians' use of intensifiers

Table 8 shows the kind of intensifiers used and the frequency with which Australians "employees" used them. "Intensifying adverbials" are clearly the intensifiers most commonly used by both male and female "employees" in the discourse. Nevertheless, when both "employee" sexes were collapsed, they showed a significant preference for using intensifiers when addressing a male "boss" ($X^2=7.69$, d.f.=1, $P<0.01$). The difference is statistically not significant in the case of a female "boss" ($X^2=1.45$, d.f.=1, $P>0.10$).

| | MM | MF | FM | FF |
|--|----|----|----|----|
| INTENSIFIERS | | | | |
| INTENSIFYING ADVERBIALS | 6 | 8 | 2 | 6 |
| c.g.: "I'm terribly sorry" | | | | |
| EXPRESSION OF EXPLICIT CONCERN FOR THE HEARER-EXTERNAL TO IPFD OR OTHER STRATEGIES | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| c.g.: "I hope it hasn't inconvenienced you" | | | | |
| MULTIPLE STRATEGIES | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| c.g.: "I'm sorry if I inconvenienced you in any way" | | | | |
| USE OF DOUBLE INTENSIFIERS OR REPETITION OF INTENSIFYING ADVERBIALS | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| c.g.: "I'm really really sorry" | | | | |

Table 8: Kind of intensifier used by Australians

Chilean results shown in Table 9 indicate a significant preference for female "employees" to avoid using intensifiers when apologizing to a male "boss" ($X^2=4.08$, d.f.=1, $P<0.05$). However male "employees" do not show the same significant result ($X^2=2.5$, d.f.=1, $P>0.10$) even though the general trend is similar to that shown by female "employees" (see Table 5). For the case of the female "boss" the pattern is similar to

the above result : $X^2=0.9$, d.f.=1, $P>0.10$ for male "employees" and $X^2=4.08$, d.f.=1, $P<0.05$ for female "employees".

| | MM | MF | FM | FF |
|-----------------------|----|----|----|----|
| USE OF INTENSIFIER | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| NO USE OF INTENSIFIER | 8 | 10 | 7 | 10 |
| TOTAL | 10 | 12 | 10 | 12 |

Table 9: Chileans' use of intensifiers

From Table 10 we observe that when Chilean "employees" used intensifiers they prefer using intensifying adverbials.

| | MM | MF | FM | FF |
|---|----|----|----|----|
| INTENSIFIERS | | | | |
| INTENSIFYING ADVERBIALS (OR NUMERAL INTENSIFIERS) | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| c.g.: "Le pido mil perdones" | | | | |
| Trans: "I ask you thousand forgiveness (plural)" | | | | |
| USE OF PLEASE | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| c.g.: "Por favor perdóneme" | | | | |
| Trans: "Please forgive me" | | | | |

Table 10: Kind of intensifier used by Chileans

DISCUSSION

Apology in a cross-cultural perspective

The use of SO and HO apologies varies between Spanish and English speakers. While Australians use only SO apologies, Chileans use both, but with a greater preference for HO apologies (see Tables 5 and 6). This tendency might reveal differences between the cultural

values of both language users. The illocutionary force of HO verbs to express an apology in Spanish e.g.: "discipline (me)", "perdone (me)", "pido disculpas/excusas" appears to have the dual function of performing the act of apologizing and asking the H for his/her participation in the act. The latter is syntactically explicit in its construction. It appears then that both acts, the act of apologizing and the act of requesting, are occurring simultaneously.

The speaker who explicitly undertakes HO apologies emphasizes the wish to support his/her own positive face — "the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others" (Brown and Levinson, 1987:61) by asking the H to participate in the act. In contrast, SO are primarily apologies that do not directly ask H of apologizing. Conversational maxims suggest that the H would be aware of the need to accept rather than to refuse the apology: this is a recognition of the co-operative principle in conversation (Brown and Yule, 1987:33)², even though in English "the S asks for forgiveness for the violation that motivated the need to apologize" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989:20). The speech act of requesting was not explicitly performed by Australian informants as it was by Spanish speakers whose semantic formulae in HO apologies were syntactically expressed. The use of HO apologies in Chilean Spanish might throw light on Chilean culture, which appears to be more group-oriented than Australian culture. Following this perspective, Australians' lack of HO strategies might be explained according to the view that "Anglo Saxon cultural tradition ... places special emphasis on the rights and on the autonomy of every individual, which abhors interference in other people's affairs (It is none of my business ...)" (Wierzbicka, 1985:150). This idea is closely linked to "the obligation not to cause damage or discomfort to others" (Wolfson et al., 1989:178) which obeys the cultural norms of American society and with the idea of non-imposition (Lakoff, 1973:298) or negative face (Brown and Levinson, 1987:61) which is regarded in an English society as polite behaviour. Therefore it appears that Australians, at least in this speech situation, seem to dislike using strategies which would directly ask H's participation in the act of apologizing, preferring instead SO apology. In fact informants employed the formula: "I'm sorry", which for being a routine, is "used in predictable ways and in predictable circumstances" (Edmondson, 1981:275) to decrease the risk of face threat (Laver, 1981:289) and to

achieve the interpersonal goal of restoring or maintaining equilibrium between S and H. Not by chance, then, do Australian speakers choose SO apology, since:

When speakers employ formulae they draw upon the community's basic verbal "stock" and demonstrate recognizable familiarity with and loyalty to the community's code and implicitly also to its values, since the petrified forms relate and refer to a special, historically given social system to which they belong

(Loveday, 1983:176).

In addition the Australians' frequent usage of the routine formula "I'm sorry" (Fig. 3) shows informants' limited variation in the choice of expression of apology. This data relates to the findings of Olshain and Cohen (1983:33) who discovered that native speakers of American English used a limited range of "explicit expression of apology". They relate also to the results obtained by Manes and Wolfson (1981) in the act of complimenting in which English speakers lacked diversity in their use of semantic formulae.

In contrast to Australians, Chileans (see Fig. 4) did not appear to use a limited number of routine formulae to express an apology since informants in the role play made use of a wide range of "(direct) explicit expression of apology". This tendency of Chilean Spanish speakers toward using a variety of semantic formulae is comparable with monolingual and bilingual Mexican-Americans who displayed much greater variation in the act of complimenting than American English speakers (Valdés and Pino, 1981:63).

It would, however, be an error to draw too strong an analogy between the speech act of apologizing performed in Chilean and the act of complimenting realized in Mexican Spanish since:

cultural norms reflected in speech acts differ not only from one language to another, but also from one regional and social variety to another

(Wierzbicka, 1985:146).

Nevertheless, it is arguable that the findings are interrelated. Therefore further studies should confirm or reject the proposition that Chilean speakers make use of a greater variety of semantic formulae in the act of complimenting. Studies should also bring to light the cultural

values that motivate Chilean Spanish speakers to use a variety or a limited number of routine formulae to perform other speech acts included in the expressive category of Searle.

Cultural aspects of the use of strategies and intensifiers

The different use of strategies between Chilean and Australian speakers is another point that might reveal cultural and social differences since:

sociocultural choices of semantic speech act strategies must be viewed as language-specific situation-specific (and) situation dependent (Olshain, 1983:246).

For example, the frequent use of an "explicit expression of apology" among Australians relates to previous studies done on apology in Australian English (Olshain, 1989:66). American English (Cohen and Olshain, 1981) and New Zealand English (Holmes, 1989).

In contrast, Chilean speakers used the strategy "(direct) explicit expression of apology" to a lesser degree than Australians, preferring instead to give an explanation for having missed an important appointment with a boss (Cordella, 1989). Speakers' preference for using one or the other apology strategy in English and Spanish may be explained by assuming that Australians and Chileans perceive the severity of the offence differently. In fact Chileans, in contrast to Australians, did not make significant use of intensifiers which are closely related to the severity of the offence (Olshain, 1983; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989) and, in some languages, linked to the different social status between the S and H (Brown and Levinson, 1989).

This one difference might reveal that groups of informants who belong to a similar social class and who have similar educational background but differ in their cultures and social reality, might perceive the obligation to explicitly humiliate themselves differently. In this case it is possible that the costs for the S for not using an "explicit expression of apology" and intensifiers after having missed an important appointment is greater in Australia than in Chile. In other words in Australia, to miss an important appointment might be perceived as a much greater offence than in Chile.

Another possibility is that the non-equal social status between S (low) and H (high) might not necessarily be a factor that triggers Chilean speakers to use an intensifier.

This point contrasts with German (Vollmer and Olshain, 1989:203) and Hebrew data (Olshain, 1989:163) in which speakers of low status most frequently used intensifiers when addressing a superior.

Effect of gender³ in the act of apologizing

Previous studies have shown that the performance of a speech act, including apology, can be affected by gender (Holmes, 1989).

In this study not all the tests performed showed statistically significant differences. For instance, there is no gender difference between English and Spanish in the use of Direct and Indirect Apology and the use of SO and HO apologies. This result is not surprising, since not all the strategies performed in a speech act are expected to show a gender-specific pattern in all the situations (e.g. Fraser, 1981:269; Tanaka and Kawade, 1983:50). Nevertheless, gender differences were detected in the use of some strategies and intensifiers. These differences, however, were not always present in both languages and when they did appear in both English and Spanish they did not follow always the same trend.

There were some cases in which both languages showed equivalent gender-specific patterns. For example, both Australian male and female "employees" used the strategy "a promise of forbearance" when apologizing to a female "boss", and Chilean female "employees" used the same strategy when addressing a "boss" of the same sex.

The strategy "promise of forbearance" is believed to be used when "the feeling of responsibility is so strong that the speaker feels the need to promise forbearance" (Blum-Kulka, 1989:21), hence we might conclude that in both languages the act is perceived as having a greater degree of severity if the recipient is a female "boss". Nevertheless, this is not the only possible explanation since, for instance, the use of "a promise of forbearance" in the case of female "boss" can be just an act of deference as occurs, in some languages, in the speech act of requesting (Walters, 1979:288; Rintell, 1979:103 and Fraser et. al., 1980:85).

Another similarity between languages was found in the use of only one or more than one expression of apology. In fact, both Chilean and

Australian male "employees" preferred to limit themselves to only one expression of apology when apologizing to a male "boss". Nevertheless the similarity does not hold for female "employees"; although Chilean female also preferred using only one expression of apology, Australian female "employees" did not. This result might be related to the problem found in the case of the use of "a promise of forbearance" which showed that female "bosses" could elicit a more deferential or H supportive act. The females' use of one expression of apology with male "bosses" might consequently indicate that the male "bosses" elicit less deferential or H supportive acts. However, for the case of Chileans this pattern is constrained by the fact that only one expression of apology is also used by female "employees" addressing female "bosses", therefore further studies should clarify this point.

Nevertheless we can test the hypothesis that the use of "a promise of forbearance" with female "bosses" and the use of only one expression of an apology with male "bosses" might indeed be interpreted as an act of deference toward female "bosses" instead of a response to a different perception of the act by studying the use of intensifiers. If "employees" had perceived the severity of the offence as greater when apologizing to a female "boss" then we would have expected a higher use of intensifiers, but this was not the case (see Tables 7 and 8 for the data which support the "deference hypothesis").

CONCLUSION

Chilean and Australian cultural values were reflected in the act of apologizing. It was possible to observe that Chilean speakers preferred giving an explanation for having missed an appointment instead of using an "(direct) explicit expression of apology" as Australians did. Chileans also prefer not using intensifiers while Australians did not show a significant preference.

The influence of gender was also found in both languages. Australian English and Chilean Spanish speakers follow similar gender patterns in the case of the use of "a promise of forbearance" (mainly uttered when apologizing to a female "boss") and "only one expression of apology" (mainly used when addressing a male "boss"). Further studies may determine whether different situations that call for an apology in Australian English and Chilean Spanish reveal variations in

the use of strategies depending on the sex of the addressee and the speaker.

Future studies may also throw light on cultural values that motivate speakers of both languages to choose a limited as opposed to a wide range of semantic formulae to perform not only apology but other speech acts included in the Searle category of expressives.

Likewise contrastive analyses may reveal whether Chilean cultural values are reflected in their English speech as it has been shown in previous studies done with Turkish, Dutch, Greek, Italian and German migrants in Australia (Clyne, 1979; 1981) and Greek migrants in the United States of America (Tannen, 1981).

Finally, as it has been suggested in interlanguage research (Faerch and Kasper, 1983; Olshtain and Cohen, 1983; Blum and Levenston, 1978; Cohen, Olshtain and Rosenstein, 1986; Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1986; Trosborg, 1987), some of the strategies used in a second or foreign language may differ from those used in the mother tongue. Differences in use of strategies between speakers may eventually provoke interpersonal misunderstandings and by consequence lead to "socio pragmatic failure" (Thomas, 1983).

It is hoped that the present study will set the basis for a better understanding of the possible outcomes of future interlanguage research in Chilean Spanish and Australian English.

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NOTES

1. IFID = Illocutionary force indicating device, Searle (1969:64).
2. I'm grateful to Ms. Ursula Nixon for this observation.
3. I use the term "sex" to refer to the biological distinction between females and males and the word "gender" to refer to the social construction of male and female. I acknowledge Dr. Anne Pauwels for this observation.

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APPENDIX I

Role play cards:

English:

"You are an employee. You have missed an important appointment with your boss. What do you say to your boss?"

Spanish:

"Usted es un(a) empleado(a). Usted faltó a una cita importante que tenía con su jefe(a). ¿Qué le diría a su jefe(a)?

APPENDIX II

STRATEGIES TO PERFORM AN APOLOGY

DIRECT APOLOGY

A. Explicit expression of apology (IFID)

1. Announcement of an apology
e.g.: "I (hereby) apologize".
2. An expression of regret
e.g.: "I'm sorry".
3. A request for forgiveness
e.g.: "Forgive me for...".
4. Offering to apologize
e.g.: "I (hereby) offer my apology for...".
5. Requesting the hearer to accept an apology
e.g.: "(Please) accept my apologies".
6. Stating one's obligation to apologize
e.g.: "I must apologize for ...".

INDIRECT APOLOGY

- B. *Explanation or account*
e.g.: "I was sick".

- C. *Acknowledgment of responsibility*
1. Accepting the blame
e.g.: "It was my fault".

2. Expressing self-deficiency
e.g.: "I wasn't well organized".

3. Recognizing hearer as entitled to an apology
e.g.: "You are right".

4. Expressing lack of intent
e.g.: "I didn't mean to ...".

5. An offer of repair/redress
e.g.: "I'll replace it for you".

6. Expression of embarrassment
e.g.: "I feel so miserable about it".

- D. *A promise of forbearance*
e.g.: "I promise it won't happen again".

Compiled from: Fraser (1981), Olshstein and Cohen (1983), Trosborg (1987) and Holmes (1989).